



Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association

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July 17, 2008

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael Capps

Commissioner Robert McDowell

Re: Docket No. 09-51

Dear Chairman and Commissioners:

I write you today on behalf of Latinos in Information Science and Technology Association (LISTA). LISTA is committed to our goals of educating, motivating and encouraging the use of technology for the empowerment of the Latino community. At our ten local chapters, we see firsthand how technology can change the lives of Hispanic students.

It is for this reason we submit reply comments on the creation of a National Broadband Plan to reiterate our goal of achieving universal broadband access and adoption. We urge the FCC to allow this issue to take precedence over other concerns that could ultimately detract from achieving this goal.

Since we last filed with the Commission, the Pew Internet and American Life Project released its 2009 study on home broadband adoption. Broadband users were surveyed on the importance of broadband in conducting activities like learning about resources in their communities and communicating with health care providers. Nearly two-thirds of users surveyed ranked broadband as "somewhat" or "very important" to carrying out those actions.

Broadband is clearly of value to its users, however, the next step will be to get non-adopters to understand its utility. Too many low-income and non-English speaking Americans are still without a home broadband connection. The Pew Hispanic Center found that merely one in three adults who speak only Spanish can use the Internet at all.

At our local chapters, we have provided new users with access to the latest technology and seen amazing results. We work to increase public awareness about the importance of technology and to prepare Hispanic youth for careers in the IT sector.

With our experience in mind, we urge the FCC's broadband plan to utilize public-private partnerships to bring broadband to anchor institutions like community centers, schools, and libraries. By coupling private sector investment with public

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facilities, new groups of Americans will have access to and learn the benefits of broadband technology. Once more Americans can understand how broadband can impact their lives, they can join the ranks of home broadband users who have come to rely on broadband for health care, education, and civic engagement.

We hope that the FCC will make 100% broadband deployment and adoption the main priority of the National Broadband Plan. Many Americans have yet to understand the benefits of broadband technology. If we wait any longer to make broadband universal, we will only exacerbate the Digital Divide.

Sincerely,

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